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LETTER DATED 9 NOVEMBER 1996 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF IRAQ TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

On instructions from my Government, I have the honour to inform you that, at 1630 hours on 4 November 1996, while the Iraqi tug Al-Amin was entering the Khawr Abd Allah waterway bound for Mina Umm Qasr in Iraqi territorial waters, a United States helicopter hovered over the vessel close to buoy No. 5 and requested it to proceed to a position six miles south of Mina al-Bakr. The tug was accompanied there by United States frigate No. 29, and dropped anchor at 1655 hours. The crew of the tug were ordered on deck for the purpose of an inspection. The frigate then lowered a rubber boat with 15 people on board who inspected the tug. At the end of the detention and inspection operation, at 1900 hours on the same day, the tug was permitted to return.

I should be grateful if you would intervene with the Government of the United States in order to put an end to such hostile acts and ensure that they are not repeated. They are carried out inside Iraqi territorial waters and are infringements of the Charter of the United Nations, and of the provisions of international law, and are a blatant violation of the sovereignty of a Member State of the United Nations and create a state of tension in this part of the region instead of promoting security.

I also affirm the established legal right of the Republic of Iraq to compensation for the damage caused to its property as a result of such acts, in accordance with the principle of State responsibility.

I should be grateful if you would have this letter circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Nizar HAMDOON
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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